

RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)

MINUTES

February 28 - March 1, 2002

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Frances Werner, Sandee McCullen, Rick Holloway, Steve Saway, Dave Bertelsen, William Branan, Mary Dahl, Lamar Smith, Norman Wallen and Joe Lane.

ABSENT: Ralph Ogden, Lorraine Eiler, John Neal, Lee Aitkin, Sanford Cohen, and Chris Newell.

BLM STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Carl Rountree, Gail Acheson, Wayne King, John Christensen, Don Applegate, Mike Taylor, Steve Gobat, Beaumont McClure, Lorraine Buck, Shela McFarlin, Lonna O'Neal, Grant Drennen, Bill Coulloudon, Deborah Stevens, Na'ama Tubman and Linda Garrison.

PRESENTERS & GUESTS: Stephen Williams, AZ State Lands Dept.; David Patterson, Center for Biological Diversity, Tucson; Julie Sherman, Sierra Club; Stephen Wood, Tucson citizen; DJ Smith, Tucson citizen; Lea Benson, Moto-Trax; Scott Burton, Cooley Charitable Works; Jenny Neeley, Defenders of Wildlife, Roy Emrick, Tucson citizen; and Bill Broyles, Sonoran Desert National Park Friends.

DAY ONE - Field Trip

Frances Werner, RAC Chairperson, officially greeted the group. Tony Herrell, Ironwood Forest National Monument Manager, Tucson Field Office, gave RAC members an overview of field tour planned with public participation. The group toured the Ironwood Forest National Monument along Pump Station Road area and traveled on to Ragged Top. In the Ragged Top area discussion centered around visitation and protection of cultural resources and sensitive species, such as desert bighorn sheep and desert tortoise. Several points of view were expressed on how do you manage for increased public visitation while protecting the species and abundant cultural resources. Other issues discussed: Urbanization, target shooting, illegal dumping, Glider Port lease and right-of-ways. Most of the activity associated with this area is the result of urbanization, with approximately 40,000 people living within 20 minutes of the monument and many people living immediately adjacent to the boundary. Multiple access points have resulted as a result of the urbanization, further complicating efforts to control the illegal activities such as target shooting. Next stop was to Silverbell Mountain area, and then on to ASARCO Mine where a discussion was held on unauthorized use issues. Lastly, a stop was made to an area of the Ironwood Forest to see the impact on resources caused by illegal migration.

DAY TWO - Business Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: Call to Order (Frances Werner, RAC Chairperson)

DISCUSSION: The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. the morning of March 1, 2002. She thanked the Tucson Field Office manager and staff for their efforts in putting together an informative field trip yesterday. Greetings and introductions were then made around the room.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Review of Previous Meeting's Minutes (Frances Werner, Chairperson)

DISCUSSION: The December 6, 2001 RAC meeting minutes were reviewed. Joe Lane stated he had been asked to stay on the RAC council as the Governor's representative.

ACTION: The Chair called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes noting the correction that Joe Lane will continue as the Governor Hull's representative be entered. The motion was entered by Sandee McCullen and seconded by Rick Holloway. The minutes were approved.

AGENDA ITEM: BLM State Director's Update on Legislation, Regulations and Statewide Issues (Carl Rountree for Denise Meridith)

DISCUSSION: Carl Rountree, the BLM-Arizona Associate State Director welcomed everyone to Tucson. (He represented Denise Meridith, the BLM-Arizona State Director, who was not able to attend today's meeting).

New Appointments: Kathleen Clarke is the new Director of BLM. She recently visited Phoenix to participate in a satellite downlink with BLM employees, and to visit with Governor Hull and staffers from the Arizona delegation. Michael Taylor has been selected as the BLM-Arizona Deputy State Director for Resources. He is currently the Phoenix Field Manager and will be reporting to the State Office in April.

Indemnity Lieu Land Selections: We are working with the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) to complete the transfer of 15,000 acres of federal surface and mineral estate to satisfy the State of Arizona's in-lieu selections. On December 12, 2001, the Arizona State Selection Board, comprised of the Governor, State Treasurer and Attorney General, formalized selection of a pool of lands near St. Johns, Arizona, to compensate the State for the outstanding in-lieu debt and the federal lands the state would receive for the trust lands within the East Range of Ft. Huachuca. The process required public consultation, and compliance with NEPA and other regulations and laws.

2002 Budget Update: All BLM field offices are reviewing goals for this year, and determining what work can be done to keep their programs effective. BLM is finalizing its annual work planning and funding distribution. Like previous years, Arizona did not receive full funding to meet its goals for FY 2002. BLM requested \$48 million and received \$35 million. However, BLM will be requesting additional funding for several issues through the year. For example, BLM has a hazardous materials cleanup near the Colorado River (Big Bend Resort). The estimated cost for cleanup is half of what Arizona received for all Hazardous Materials issues in the State. Another funding adjustment was in Soil, Water, and Air. In the past, BLM received \$100,000 in support of U.S./Mexico Border coordination. The funding was removed, halting several on going efforts.

Update on Fire Condition: Our fire season is not looking good. The latest BLM fire was near Sierra Vista, burning over 4,400 acres. While we are hoping for spring and summer rains, this could be a much worse fire season than in previous years. Winter precipitation and snow pack throughout the Southwest is 38 percent of normal. BLM-AZ is gearing up for the worst possible scenario.

Drought Condition Impacts on Grazing: Due to the drought, field office grazing programs will and already are being affected. Bill Civish, Manager of Safford Field Office, is meeting with permittees concerning this situation. Our bottom line is protecting our resources. While we don't see problem right now, we may be forced to reconsider our position and how we address the situation. Director Clark has started working with ranchers to possibly set up a reserve situation (offering legislation) to help alleviate some of the drought concerns.

Dos Pobres/San Juan Phelps Dodge Project/FEIS Production Schedule: The BLM and BIA are working on resolving several issues related to the Dos Pobres/San Juan Phelps Dodge Project. A February 2002 decision by Assistant Secretary Steven Griles outlines a process in which BIA and BLM will engage in a facilitated effort to: 1) revise and improve the proposed groundwater monitoring and mitigation plan for the Project; 2) conduct Tribal consultation; 3) and complete the NEPA process and Environmental Impact Statement. In addition, Secretary Griles has requested a schedule and time line from BIA and BLM, showing how this facilitated process will be accomplished. He has requested a determination as soon as possible on the groundwater model from the Solicitor's Office.

Wild Horse and Burro Adoption: Recently completed two very successful wild horse and burro adoptions, one in Scottsdale and the other in Apache Junction. Eighty-four animals (62 horses and 22 burros) were adopted. BLM received excellent press coverage from the Phoenix media.

State Director's Priorities: Have been completed for FY 2002.

Frances Werner: Is your fire budget separate from your operating budget? *Carl Rountree:* Yes, it is not encumbered by the same process.

Frances Werner: Compared to last year, is the budget about even or significantly below? *Carl Rountree:* It is actually a bit more, but the cost of living increases has swallowed up the addition funds. So we are probably a bit low because we have no discretionary money like we did last year. We will be making a couple of trips to the Washington Office (WO) this year to update them.

Steve Saway: You would think the monuments would provide more money. *Carl Rountree:* You would; however, the Washington Office is currently working with the administration.

Deborah Stevens announced to the RAC that a 45-day call ending approximately April 23, 2002, will go public shortly for nominations to the RAC council.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Arizona Supreme Court Ruling on State Land Grazing Leases (Stephen Williams, AZ State Land Department, Range Section Manager, and Bill Coulloudon, BLM State Rangeland Conservationist).

DISCUSSION: Stephen Williams of the Arizona State Land Dept. (ASLD), opened by saying there has been substantial changes in the Jefferies case, which was resolved out of court. He spoke about current land grazing rights cases in the newspapers. The case of Forest Guardians and Jonathan D. Tate v. J. Dennis Wells and the Arizona State Land Department, CV-00-0177PR, resulted from the Land Department's denial of grazing lease applications by applicants who offered to pay more than the appraised grazing rate but stated they had no intention of grazing the subject land during the full term of the lease.

The ASLD's position was that putting a grazing lease to a use other than its intended purpose (grazing of livestock) was not appropriate. The offer of additional rent was not an important consideration to the ASLD for these three applications because it was offered in the context of a grazing use. The ASLD's position was that commercial classification and a commercial lease were appropriate, given the applicants' intended purpose and use for the land, and that an appraisal for such purpose and use would result in the best rental. The Supreme Court disagreed. It stated the ASLD may not summarily disregard and label restorative uses as inappropriate for grazing land. It further stated restorative uses must be considered by the Land Commissioner when proposed by the high bidder.

The Supreme Court vacated the Court of Appeals opinion, and reversed the Superior Court judgement. The case was remanded to the trial court with instructions to enter judgement requiring the Land Commissioner to determine if the applicants' high bids were, in the long term, best for the school trust lands and their beneficiaries. If so, the Commissioner shall accept the bids, and issue the leases. There are at least two possible issues for BLM grazing permittees, who are also the Land Department lessees within the same allotment, if someone conflicts the renewal of the state grazing lease. One issue could be the loss of base waters on the State Trust land, resulting in the need for an adjustment in the grazing capacity for the adjoining federal range. The other issue could be livestock trespass if the BLM permittee's livestock graze State Trust land that is now leased to another party.

Bill Coulloudon, BLM-AZ Rangeland Conservationist, stated that the Arizona State Supreme Court ruling has an adverse affect on public land permittees with grazing operations that are both dependent on Federal and State lands for their total operation. State lands with high resource values could be targeted by some interest groups. There are approximately 3.3 million acres of State Land intermingled with approximately 600 grazing allotments. Future management problems are difficult to gauge at this time.

Mary Dahl: Was it solely on the basis of principle that the Forest Guardians and State did not pursue reclassification to commercial for those lands they applied to lease for grazing non-use?

Steve Williams: The Guardians did not want to pay the extra (money) fee for the commercial permit.

Lamar Smith: I have heard that the Cadreack Canyon is in very good condition.

Norman Wallen: Does action on current applications await court decision (remanded back)? Are you waiting to assess the three permits now? *Steve Williams:* Yes, it could be about six months away.

Steve Gobat: Terry Tempest Williams' article stated Arizona's policy in similar situations would be mining exploration. *Carl Rountree:* There is little mining exploration in Arizona, but we would not respond in such fashion. We would evaluate with public input.

David Bertelsen: Is there case law guidance that you use to determine these cases?

Steve Williams: The AZ Constitution states that the lessee will be reimbursed for improvements to the lease. The way we interpreted our laws, there was no need for testimony.

William Branan: Sighted a rancher neighbor that is older and unable to keep up with his property. These are places that the land have been abused and the State Land Dept is paying for it now. I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that these places weren't picked at random, but were picked because they were abused.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Update on National Mountain Biking Strategy (Don Applegate, BLM Statewide Recreation Planner).

DISCUSSION: The Chair introduced Don Applegate, BLM-Arizona's Recreation Planner. Don opened by handing out BLM's Mountain Bike Strategy and the National Bike Outreach Action Plan for BLM. (See hand outs for details).

As a side-development of the National OHV Management Strategy Plan a team was established to develop a national mountain bike management strategy in 2001. The first step was to develop a process to follow, who to involve, and how. That was done by the end of FY 2001. However, FY 2002 funding for the team to continue was not forthcoming; also, the proposal was delayed until the new BLM Director and DOI Secretary could be briefed, provide comments and then go forward. Washington Office is now in line awaiting to do this. Meanwhile, funding for the process has been requested for FY 2003 and BLM has been meeting with representative user groups to identify national issues that the plan will need to resolve. The "focus areas" so far are: multiple user conflicts on the same trail, environmental impacts of mountain bike activities, establishing capacity and allocation decisions, applicable outdoor ethics, developing worthwhile partnerships, education programs, and rulemaking. Washington anticipates a public announcement regarding launching the strategy development effort in about three months. This includes a "Powerpoint" presentation, Questions and Answer sheets for mailings, talking points for public meetings and news releases that would launch the strategy.

Steve Saway: Funding is going to be a challenge, and there are several ways to approach it. I think if you can get a broader base group behind you, i.e., not just mountain bikers behind you, and maybe fee demo locations that might work, you may be able to get the funding needed.

Rick Holloway: Fee areas are going to be essential. Every year the budget goes down and you are expected to do more with less. If they want it, they need to figure out ways to help cooperatively pay for it.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on BLM International Programs (Beaumont McClure, BLM Special Assistant for International Affairs)

DISCUSSION: Beaumont McClure, BLM-AZ Special Assistant for International Affairs, briefed the group on the United States-Mexico Border Issues. BLM-AZ only has about 4 miles of international border, but although it is small, there are a number of issues and impacts that four of our seven field offices deal with. The Southern areas include 3 national conservation areas, 2 monuments and 15

wilderness area. He provided a glimpse of the breadth of border issues BLM faces in AZ. (See handout for details).

- 1). Water, e.g., Upper San Pedro River Basin. Seven miles of perennial stream, but need to take into account the headwaters are located in Mexico. The Cananea Mine area has a population of 30,000, and is highly dependent upon the mine. The mine has 59 wells within the Basin. Agriculture and livestock grazing operations are also within the Basin in Mexico. Therefore, it is extremely important to communicate with our Mexico counterparts and share information.
 - 2). Neotropical Migratory Birds, over 400 bird species. Two monitoring sites have been established in Mexico.
 - 3). Invasive Species, e.g., Giant Salvinia, Buffelgrass. Invasive species are causing problems in the border area.
 - 4) T&E Species, e.g., Sonoran Pronghorn, Yuma Clapper Rail and Desert Pupfish. Have been working for many years with the Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Team; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), Department of Defense (DOD), AZ Game and Fish Dept. (AGFD), BLM and our Mexico counterparts are partners in this effort.
 - 5). Cultural Resources, e.g., Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Arizona was once part of the Spanish Empire, thus, we have many cultural ties with Mexico.
 - 6). Border Fire Management. Dept. of Interior, USFS and SEMARNAT signed a Wildlife Protection Agreement in June 1999.
 - 7). Transportation & Utilities. Canada and Mexico (CANAMEX) are partners in planning effort; also a collaborative planning effort by AZ, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, and Montana. Tucson Electric Power (TEP) and Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) have applied for Presidential permits to construct high voltage electric transmission projects to Mexico. Maestros group requested a Presidential permit to construct a 500 megawatt natural gas fueled electric powerplant in the vicinity of Nogales, and a transmission line up to 9 miles in length to Mexico.
 - 8). Undocumented Workers caused damage to natural and cultural resources. They impact federal land visitors, public services, federal employees working in the area, and residents and businesses located on federal and reservation lands. (As you saw yesterday on our field trip to Ironwood National Monument there are significant issues and concerns).
 - 9). Border and Other Fences Cut. International boundary fence in many locations is repeatedly cut or torn down, resulting in Mexican livestock trespassing on federal land in the U.S. Also U.S. livestock wanders into Mexico and is seldom returned, or they are rustled.
 - 10). Border Roads Built and Fences Reinforced. Seven-strand barbed wire fence delineated the international border a few years ago. Now there are roads and reinforced fences to keep vehicles from crossing over.
 - 11). Trash and Human Waste has become a very serious issue. Tons of trash and high concentrations of human waste are left behind. This impacts wildlife, vegetation and water quality. Also detracts from scenic qualities and can effect human and animal health.
 - 12). Natural and Cultural Resources Damage. Trees are carved up. Shelters are built, destroying vegetation in the area. Warming and cooking fires are built and abandoned, sometimes causing wildfires.
 - 13). Unwanted Trails have been created (hundreds, maybe thousands). Wilderness character has been reduced by creation of unwanted roads, trails, damage and trash. Proliferation damages and destroys cactus and other sensitive vegetation, disrupts or prohibits revegetation, disturbs wildlife and their cover, and travel routes, causes soil compaction and erosion.
 - 14). Abandoned Vehicles. Large numbers of vehicles are abandoned and are difficult and costly to remove. Vehicle tracks quickly turn into unwanted roads.
 - 15). Dehydration, Illness and Death. Humane Borders have requested placement of drinking water at strategic points. Water must meet State and Federal water quality standards. Very sensitive issue as people could die.
 - 16). Partnerships established to address these issues are Federal Communications Council (FCC), Southwest Strategy (SWS)-LaFrontera Work Group, International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA), U.S. Border Patrol-SWS Memorandum of Understanding, and Friends of the San Pedro-Cananea.
- Norman Wallen:* Is there a way the RAC could make recommendations to address the basic issues rather than the vandalism? Could the RAC come up with some policy recommendations to deal with the main issues as well as the symptoms? Not just a band-aid effect.
- Lamar Smith:* Could we do a cost analysis of the effects of these programs and our time and actions spent on it? We need to work with ranchers and other customer users of the public lands to

show what the illegal problems are costing above drugs and such. There are many affects on the lands and other areas that people are not aware of. We need to bring these problems and cost analysis to their attention in Washington.

Beau McClure: At the request of Congressman Kolbe we have put together a report to address the impacts of undocumented aliens (UDA) in southern AZ. It has not got to Congress yet, but it does show we are talking in the millions of dollars to deal with the problem alone. Most Law Enforcement Rangers time are taken up with UDA issues (who we met yesterday).

Steve Saway: Can we do an interagency agreement with the Border Patrol to be reimbursed for some of these efforts since it seems to be their job?

Gail Acheson: I agree there should be a way for reimbursement of some of these expenses. We have spoken to the Border Patrol and they claim they don't have the responsibility of removing the abandoned vehicles from BLM land.

Carl Rountree: I was truly encouraged. Beau is working with the Border Patrol and is making a training video to make them aware that it is their responsibility to protect the resources along the border.

Frances Werner: NEPA was never addressed for the border patrol road along border. Also drilled wells. Tucson press indicates the Border Patrol now has to address habitat, endangered species, etc. using NEPA and other environmental laws when disturbing land.

Gail Acheson: They are writing their own NEPA process. They are realizing they need to come up with their own processes and not rely on BLM to come up with the processes.

Mike Taylor: At least on the Goldwater site, they are realizing they need to come to the table.

Frances Werner: I think the tide is turning. Tucson has a new Border Patrol manager, but it will take awhile.

Carl Rountree: Tucson is starting to send one of their rangers to the monthly meeting.

Gail Acheson: The office in El Centro has been meeting with 30 people for a long time now. They are writing their own NEPA documents. I think at the ground level they are making some progress. That doesn't always translate to ground troops, but they realize it is not just BLM resources to be used.

Frances Werner: There are a lot of new recruits from the northeast and they don't know much about public lands. It is a whole cultural education.

ACTION: The Chair suggested that a briefing paper be prepared of the concerns and possible solutions to the border issues. It will be on the next meeting agenda. Norman Wallen and Rick Holloway volunteered to work together to prepare a draft briefing paper to be circulated to the RAC by email prior to the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Update on the 43 CFR 3809 Surface Management Regulations (Steve Gobat, BLM-AZ Acting Deputy State Director for Resources).

DISCUSSION: Steve Gobat, Acting Deputy State Director for Resources, gave a update on the status of 43 CFR 3809, Surface Management of Exploration and Mining Operations on Public Lands. The final rules apply to Mining Law minerals on public lands.

Major change:

- Definition of Unnecessary or Undue Degradation - using historic definition, excludes "substantial irreparable harm".

Notices:

- Two years under terms of existing Notice.
- Notice may be extended after two years.
- Modifications that add acreage require compliance with the new regulations.

New Notice Operator Requirements:

- Reclamation plan.
- Estimate of reclamation cost.
- Financial guarantee.
- Exploration only under five acres.
- Bulk sampling less than 1000 tons.

Financial Guarantee:

- All Notices and Plans must have one.
- Must cover all estimated reclamation costs, as if BLM were to contract with a third party.
- Bonds were supposed to be taken care of by BLM last July. We are waiting for instructions from the Washington Office on adding administrative costs.

Release of Financial Guarantee:

- 30-day public notification prior to release.
- 60% may be released for completed “earth work”

When is Plan of Operations Required:

- All mining activity greater than casual use.
- Bulk sampling that removes 1,000 tons or more ore.
- Disturbance greater than casual use in special status areas.

“Outcome based” performance:

- Mitigation/reclamation plans should look at total impacts and amount of disturbance.
- Criteria of impacts based on Rangeland Standards, Riparian Standards, and Land Use Plans, etc.

Penalties:

- Civil penalties have been retained.
- Criminal penalties no longer part of 3809 except in cases where operator lies to the government.

Split Estate:

- New regulations apply to state split estate lands.
- Will help prevent degradation of state lands.
- BLM needs to work with the State in implementation.

Existing and Pending Plans:

- Continue under terms and conditions of existing Plan.
- New rules, except Plan content and performance standards, apply.
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Norman Wallen: What is our BLM-AZ policy in relation to this policy? I received an e-mail from Terry Tempest Williams in Yuma. She and her friends were appalled at the destruction being created by huge trucks driving on washes instead of existing roads. A lot of resource damage was created because of these trucks.

Carl Rountree: Our policy is to hold operators to their plans of operations and the terms and conditions set forth in these plans as analyzed and determined through the NEPA process.

ACTION: The Chair suggested due to the time allotted for each presentation, further discussion on the update of 43 CFR 3809 Surface Management Regulations continue as an agenda item for the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period

DISCUSSION: The Chair opened by saying the RAC welcomed the public at today’s meeting and asked anyone wishing to speak to identify themselves and who, if anyone, they were representing.

Steve Woods (Tucson citizen): The article that Norman Wallen referred to earlier, as a part of clarification on the seismic trucks and oil and gas exploration, was in last Thursday’s New York Times OP ED section. It’s available on the website, type “arches” in the search engine.

Jenney Neeley (Defenders of Wildlife): We have over 10,000 members that call Arizona home. Our members are very supportive of protecting Arizona’s national monuments and the resources for which

they were created. We expect that management will, above all, place priority on conserving, protecting and restoring the natural and cultural values of the landscape. It must be recognized that uses of the land are secondary to this objective, and any uses that are allowed must be absolutely consistent and should in no way undermine this objective or have the potential to undermine this objective.

Finally, I want to remind the members of the Resource Advisory Council that the creation of these monuments had tremendous public support, despite claims to the contrary. In the case of the Ironwood Forest National Monument, not only did both the Pima and Pinal County Board of Supervisors pass resolutions supporting the creation of this monument, but the Pinal Board actually supported a much larger area to be included than what was actually designated. The Public wants to see these lands protected for future generations, and they expect that this council will do all they can to ensure that the natural and cultural resources for which these monuments were created will not be sacrificed in order to appease a vocal, but very small minority. Thank you.

Leah Benson (Moto-Trax, Inc). In June 2001, Motor-Trax, Inc. (a non-profit organization) incorporated in the State of Arizona. The organization was created as a pilot program with the goal of duplicating its concept nationwide. Off-highway and non-motorized recreation activities are an issue with communities in Arizona. Media coverage and public concern are increasing due to environmental impact issues; increasing number of OHV/NMA enthusiasts; urban sprawl; the need for additional youth and family programs; and the need for additional hands-on awareness safety training. Due to the increasing number of individuals involved in off-highway motorized vehicle (OHV) and non-motorized activities in urban areas, our Board members have come together to develop an "Urban OHV/NMA Park". Our mission is to provide a year-round Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) and Non-Motorized (NM) Park in Maricopa County. The Park, through collaborative partnerships with communities, regulating agencies and visitors, will provide a facility that assists in minimizing trespass and deterioration of Arizona's natural resources; safety training to reduce injuries associated with outdoor motorized and non-motorized activities, youth and family programs that promote respect for the environment, state laws and regulations, technology based academic programs, individual self-esteem, good stewardship, and family values; affordable experiences for all (including socio-economically disadvantaged individuals); and opportunity to build relationships between OHV/NMA visitors, supporters and regulating agencies.

We applied for a grant with the AZ State Parks and received a letter recently that said due to the amount of time BLM needs to process an Resource Management Plan (RMP) the grant is now ineligible. I'm not sure where I need to go with this. Maybe members of the RAC can assist me. We have become a member of the steering committee in Cooley and feel that through our partnership with NOVAK, MOTORCYCLES, ATVS, dealerships, etc, in creating a special facility we'll be able to make an impact in protection and education. Is there some way to speed up the RMP process? I know there are NEPA and State Parks requirements, but I hate to see this program which has gained so much national recognition, not occur. The YMCA no longer has a program because they have no place to conduct it. The Park would be the ideal place to conduct these activities.

Mike Taylor (BLM Phoenix Field Office): Our staff is working on the RMP process. I will work with you to see if there is a way we can speed up the process.

Norman Wallen: Is this application for funding through the AZ State Parks?

Leah Benson: Yes, they are the funding agency (responsible for the administration of Heritage fund). The piece of property is coming through the RMP, so we have timing issues.

Daniel Patterson (Southwest Center for Biological Diversity): We have 8,000 members. Suggested that if industry (Moto-Trax and its partnerships, etc.) want to promote places for OHV/NMA uses they should do it on their own, without government grants, etc. I would encourage the RAC to be careful about developing activities on public lands. California is an example that is out of control, and if BLM-AZ is not careful it will follow suit. They should not ask public to foot the bill. I want to touch base on our national monuments. Of course local people are concerned about the directives coming from Washington. The interim guideline basically gave the management guidelines for places like Ironwood Forest National Monument. We anticipate getting adequate funding will be difficult, but we encourage the Bureau to take the conservative approach until

management plans are in place. Specifically with Ironwood, there is an ongoing trespass with the ASARCO Mine Co., who built an illegal pipeline, power-line and road, while BLM looked the other way. We would expect that a trespass proceedings would be initiated immediately; it has not happened yet and it is long over due.

The only other point I have is it is a dry year, which increases fire dangers, and we hope that BLM managers will be proactive in dealing with grazing issues before they become serious problems. It is great that BLM is asking voluntary reduction of livestock, but if that doesn't work they need to act. If people are not going to take responsibility to protect the lands BLM needs to act. That is the job they are paid to do. Overall, we want to be able to backup the moves that the BLM make and support the agency that considers the national public and not just industry issues. Our staff is increased and we will be watching AZ BLM more this year. We would like to be partners for restoration and conservation.

Bill Broyles (Sonoran Desert National Park Friends): We are a group dedicated to encouraging people to understand, appreciate and respect the Sonoran Desert. Last year Arizona got very lucky. The Diamondbacks won the World Series and we got some new national monuments. These monuments, like the ones the year before, rank with AZ's greatest wins. Now we must take care of them. We must gather sufficient funding for these new monuments to write sound planning documents, to staff them, to study and monitor, to enforce regulations and policies, and realize some of them will be baseline and will need to continue throughout the lifetime of the monument. We also need to adequately fund enforcement, there is no reason to have regulations if they can not be enforced. Anything the RAC could do would be appreciated. We must protect the values for which the monuments were established. We must protect the wildlife, plants, and archaeology. If we are not careful they will become city parks. We need to be thinking about the deserts sustainable uses that we, our children and grandchildren can enjoy, like we do now, for the long term. Arizona's population is now 5 million and predicted to rise to 9 or 10 million by 2020. Three of these new monuments are next to urban areas, and will be increasingly important for open space, wildlife, scenery, hiking and hunting.

I am impressed with the role of BLM and its monument staffs. They are winners. But they need our help to ensure that Congress provides them with adequate funds. We're proud of our Diamondbacks. We're even prouder of our new monuments. I understand BLM has other priorities and money is being siphoned off, but the monuments are the flagships of BLM. This is a way BLM can have monuments, wilderness areas, sort of the feature all-star areas, not only for the sake of livestock, plant life, wildlife, etc., but BLM itself. We need all friends of BLM, including this Resource Advisory Council, to give their full support to protect the monuments and ensure they are adequately funded.

Julie Sherman (Sierra Club): We have approx. 11, 000 members in Arizona. We would like these new monuments to be a model of preservation for Arizona. I wish to compliment that local BLM staff. They are working very hard to manage these monuments. We are seeing more visitation in the monuments and we are concerned about their protection in the face of much-increased use. We ask BLM to refer to the proclamation and to manage the monuments to protect the objects and resources the monuments were designed for. All monuments are near communities that are growing, and this increase in population will mean increased visitation. We need to look ahead in our planning to be sure we are establishing management that will withstand impacts of higher population. To do that, we need to be aware that the proclamation requires BLM to protect objects, but does not mandate BLM to provide or increase recreation opportunities. We believe the monuments already provide many recreation opportunities; we should not increase these opportunities if they would negatively impact monument values. We ask that BLM be very careful when planning for recreation to ensure they are managing recreation so it does not adversely impact the objects and resources the monuments protects.

Like Daniel Patterson, I am part of the group negotiating with ASARCO. We would also ask that you go ahead and proceed with trespass proceedings, it probably should have happened a long time ago. I would like to echo Bill Broyles' point about funding; it is really critical that we begin monitoring as soon as we can.

Roy Emrick (Tucson citizen): Representing himself, but stated he is also a member of the Sierra Club and Southwest Center of Biological Diversity. The main reason I am here is that I am a retiree, so I don't work, which gave me the luxury last November of getting to see the Grand Canyon Parashont National Monument. I was inspired enough to attend to the training event on the cooperative training. I want to support all the comments made, but I came away with a good feeling that the BLM mangers care for the land and want to preserve it and return it to its original state. I support the comments on the monuments, but would like also ask the RAC to give BLM support for the job they are doing.

William Branan: What was the consensus on issues of the ASARCO visit yesterday? *Frances Werner:* There was no consensus. *Daniel Patterson:* I want the RAC to understand that ASARCO has made no good faith effort since last spring. Also the alliance of organizations in discussion with ASARCO is a close alliance between the community and citizens, not just environmentalists. And if we want to follow Norton's localized control rhetoric it is counterproductive to think that as soon as we locals work together to protect an area, if it goes against industry, then we need the heavy hand of Washington to come in and go against local people in favor of industry.

ACTION: The Chair thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and presenting their concerns for our national monuments. It is good to hear so many people consider our monuments national treasures and applaud BLM for the work they are doing.

AGENDA ITEM: Field Office Rangeland Resource Team Member Proposals (BLM Field Managers).

DISCUSSION: None

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Reports from BLM Field Managers

DISCUSSION:

Yuma Field Office (YFO), (Gail Acheson)

- Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, under the auspices of the Park Service, but BLM also has land. It's the first such area west of the Mississippi. Some projects are the Yuma Birding and Nature Festival, the second annual will be April 17-21, and registration packets are available today. There will be lots of tours and seminars. We have \$60,000 in corporate sponsorship from the community and \$10,000 from registration fees. We are moving toward it becoming self-sustaining. Our keynote speaker is John Acorn.
- Will host the first joint meeting of two major collaborative groups, the California Biodiversity Council and the Arizona/New Mexico Southwest Strategy. The two groups are interested in water and resource issues along the Colorado River. Meeting is scheduled for March 13-14.
- Plan to do a final gather of 250 wild burros in March and May to achieve the appropriate management level (AML) of 165 animals in the Cibola Herd. This is a major milestone in our collaborative efforts with our partner agencies. The report is that the vegetation is doing extremely well in the HMA.
- Sears Point (Gila River Cultural Area) was managed out of Phoenix for a long time. In 1985 it was designated as critical environmental concern. It is in the Federal Register as a historic and cultural area, consisting of 3,000 acres. The rudimentary beginnings of a power point presentation was then passed around the room. There is a lot of history out there; was on a traveled route many years ago. We have had theft of petroglyphs, the latest was in 1988. A picture of the area was on the Yuma Visitor Guide Magazine in 2000. About 30 miles west of Gila Bend, when you go out there it feels like a spiritual area. We've been very active in trying to acquire the land. Would like to take the RAC on a tour of it. Seeing a lot more of visitation of the site. The City of Yuma wants to partner with us on this area. It's a good opportunity on ecotourism. The more visitation out there, the more protection the site will have.

Tucson Field Office (TFO), (Shela McFarlin)

- Glad you got to go on the tour. You now know where we need help, and perhaps can give us ideas on ASARCO, we do have a draft trespass announcement. Some interpret it as a cease and desist for all operations and others see it differently.
- Las Cienegas: the proposed plan and final EIS: basically the SVPP and BLM met and went over some issues. The biological subcommittee will be meet tomorrow to address issues such as how we would cap the number of animals. Will probably need assistance from you (RAC). We are currently working on the final plan. We are hoping to complete the final draft by April 4, and forward to Washington for review.
- San Pedro: continuing to deal with the border issues Beau McClure presented to you today. The water studies and issues will continue for some time. The Upper Sand Pedro Partnership needs to get to the point of adopting measures. On April 27, there will be the Friends of San Pedro fling. It's an all day educational and recreation special event, and will be recognize volunteers.
- Fires: have had them on both the Las Cienegas and San Pedro. Expecting a bad fire year. Our staff is preparing for the worst. These fires were all human caused either by arson or campfires and maybe in one instance a smoke bomb.
- Unofficially designated area, the Middle Gila. It is a resource conservation area. Putting together a team to work with the Middle Gila Partnership. Issues will be mining, wilderness, water, T&E, and recreation. It is a bit behind on planning at this time.

Safford Field Office (SFO), (Wayne King for Bill Civish)

Arid Land Studies:

- Working with the Office of Arid Land Studies, University of Arizona, using the San Simon Valley as a classroom. Started the first in a series of four courses using the San Simon, Instructors of the course are Dr. Stuart E. Marsh, Professor; Dr. Sam Drake, Assistant Professor; and Dr. Kenneth E. Foster, Professor. Students taking a series of courses are primarily PHD candidates from a variety of disciplines. The four courses are: ARL 641 - Natural and Human Impacts on the Arid Lands (3 Units); ARL 642 - Use and Management of Arid Lands (3 units); ARL 643 - Cultures and Institutions of Arid Lands (3 units); and ARL 644 - Biodiversity and Sustain ability on Arid Lands. (3 units). For more information on courses available contact the University of Arizona or Safford Field Office.

The Cooperative Rangeland Monitoring Program:

- Reported 456,246 acres monitored/inventoried for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFS) and BLM from Oct. 2000 through Sept. 2001. The BLM subtotal was 326,205 acres including 75 key areas. The USFS subtotal 130,041 acres and 40 key areas. Funding was provided to UA Agricultural Extension by BLM (56%) and USFS (44%). The first year program employed one full-time technician and one part-time technician who started halfway through the year.
- Scope of MOU with University of Arizona includes two factor: 1). Keep a range technician in the field to collect soil and vegetation data, 2). Provide workshops for ranchers. Both factors have been a great success.
- Added program benefits received by BLM and USFS are:
 - BLM received help in compilation of historical transect data in BLM range files, which accomplished the mission of making all data accessible and retrievable from the Internet.
 - USFS received a round of grazing lawsuits from the Southwest Center of Biological Diversity. Grazing allotments which have been monitored though this program were withdrawn from the lawsuits.

Service First:

- A Service First proposal was coauthored by BLM and USFS to acquire an additional two range technicians for six months each, and one GIS technician for one year. The full amount of the proposal was awarded at \$51,000.

Kingman Field Office (KFO), (John Christensen)

- Author Tony Davis, wrote a fair article and assessment on the Santa Maria Ranch. His article is in the High Country News.
- Proceeding on track with permit renewals and standards and guidelines assessments.
- RRT is very active and emphasis is currently on Santa Maria Ranch Lease. (NWF lawsuit)
- Prescribed burns: Vock Canyon in the Cerbat Mountains; have completed 3000 acres. Hibernia Canyon in the Hualapai Mountains has a total of 3,500 acres to treat; completed 1,500 acres so far.

- The dedication of Castle Rock Trail will be April 20, 2002. Invited the RAC to attend. Cerbat Foothills Recreation Area and collaboration of acquisitions accomplished this past year with a little over 1200 acres in partnership with The Conservation Fund.
- Received a letter of gratitude from the Hualapai Nation, Louise Benson, Chairwoman, thanking John Christensen for assisting the nation in obtaining the Valentine Cemetery.

Rick Holloway: Where do you stand with your corral issue?

John Christensen: Not too much progress on a new facility. The dollars for the new site construction are currently scheduled for FY-2005. No movement on the State Lease/Purchase of the site that we currently rent from the State. In the interim we have been able to contract for two short term storage areas, thanks to ranchers in the area that have allowed us the store burros on their property. For the long term we can't seem to get the help we need.

Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO). (Lonna O'Neal, Acting Manager)

- Introduced herself saying she has been acting manager for Don Ellsworth for the last two months and her assignment is coming to a close. The opportunity has provided her with additional insight in the day to day workings of a Field Office which she hopes to bring that back to her position as Deputy State Director for Business and Support Services in the State Office.
- As Don mentioned at the last RAC meeting LHFO started a new Resource Management Plan (RMP). Although, its work continues as the highest priority, because of budget constraints we are unable to hire some of the resource specialists needed this year. The schedule has been extended for one year.
- Scoping will continue to be the emphasis this year, and meetings have taken place with Regions 3 and 4 of the Arizona Game and Fish, Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society and Mohave County Trails Association. Additional scoping meetings were held at Lake Havasu Parks and Recreation, Lake Havasu Winterfest (2 days), and at Wayside and Brenda RV Parks.
- Had a successful gather of Burros at Alamo Lake last month.
- Fires: only fire related activity recently was campfire on the California side that got out of control of the campers. The Fire Department and other campers in the area helped to put out the fire. The camper was cited.
- Want to emphasize the diverse challenges that face BLM-Lake Havasu Office on a daily basis. There are approximately 10,000 visitors per year on the lake through the use of boat launch ramps, camping, and boat-in camp sites, plus the heavy OHV use and Concession use due to the close proximity to Phoenix, Las Vegas and California.

Phoenix Field Office (PFO), (Mike Taylor)

Land Tenure Situation:

- At the crossroads right now. We went through years worth of negotiations identifying lands unusable to State due to location. It is something the State feels very strongly about and we need to be prepared if the time ever comes that they can exchange or we can exchange. Asked Carl Rountree, BLM-AZ Associate State Director, to assess the land tenure adjustment program in Arizona. With the State Land Exchange Agreement in place we are poised to deal with it organizationally.
- Met with RAC members (Frances Werner, Steve Saway, Rich Holloway and Sandee McCullen) to brainstorm the issue.
- Will be refining a position paper for presentation to the BLM-AZ State Leadership Team. Will use the State Land Conference to gather statewide input for final package.
- Thoughts at this time are that BLM can continue on as we are now, re: State Exchange Team and LWCF funding.
- BLM-AZ can look at reorganization which will allow us to address the State Land Exchange Agreement and obtain a greater role in the land tenure adjustments. Can look at it in a regional way. Also can take a leadership role in bringing together other agencies and special interest groups to address land adjustments on a greater scale and scope.

Planning Effort:

- Continuing community outreach efforts to set the stage for the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw planning efforts. Working with James Kent and Associates to identify community leaders network. Started a number of community meetings last month. Will officially go back to scoping meetings also.
- The Black Canyon City meeting was very successful, over 100 people; asked their concerns in their area and told them of our concerns. Suggested the RAC could be involved in these meetings as a good conduit for the RAC to interface with the public.

Standard and Guidelines:

- The work that the RAC did was so invaluable in helping us with the S&Gs. Bill Coulloudon, Ron Hooper and others helped us with the S&Gs for Sonoran Pronghorn. They recognized that the data didn't hold up to the measures they were looking for.
- Two success stories on S&Gs: 1) Recognized at the FLPMA 25th Anniversary celebration for the work done on Bumble Bee allotment and by environmental group in response to criticism of another environmental group. 2) AJO allotment evaluations providing data to identify potential changes for Fish and Wildlife Services for the Sonoran Pronghorn.

National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS):

- The Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM) celebration is Saturday, March 2, in Gila Bend. Working to get community support of gateway committees for monuments. Completion of route inventory on SDNM for planning effort.
- Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) Open House is on April 6, at the LaPata and will show some of the area resources. Also, PFO is piloting the Bureau's Image project on the AFNM. Signs will be installed by the April 6.
- Working with the Sonoran Institute and The Nature Conservancy on development of weed management area in the Ajo and Sonoran Desert National Monument.

Sandy McCullen: How can we find out about these meetings?

Mike Taylor: PFO will send a list of the scheduled outreach meetings to interested RAC members.

AZ Strip Field Office (ASFO)

- No report was presented.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Public Relations Working Group (Steve Saway, Chair)

DISCUSSION: Steve Saway handed out a draft edition of the RAC NOTES (newsletter) prepared for publication in February. Unfortunately, this occurred during the period that BLM was disconnected from the internet and external e-mail, which delayed getting the draft to Deborah Stevens. The draft RAC NOTES will be updated to reflect the results of the RAC tour of February

28 and today's meeting. Steve asked the RAC members to let him know of any items they would like included in the RAC NOTES and he will incorporate into the newsletter.

Sandy McCullen: What is the extent of the mailing list for the RAC NOTES?

Deborah Stevens: Basically, interest groups and agencies; there are approximately 1,500 addresses in the database.

ACTION: Deborah Stevens will assist Steve in showing the results from the July 2001 RAC meeting in Payson, AZ, and will send the RAC NOTES to the addressees on the mailing list.

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Standards & Guidelines Working Group (Lamar Smith, Chair)

DISCUSSION: Lamar Smith, opened by saying the working group met and discussed the proposal to have the Las Cienegas Biological Planning Group sanctioned by the RAC as an RRT. It was decided a special RRT would probably be best. It is our recommendation that we receive suggestions of members from the BLM staff by our next RAC meeting, so if it requires official RAC action we can do so. As far as I know, the only RRT guideline was that several interests need to be involved so there would be a cross section of the different interests for this area.

We feel that there is a need for additional training on standard and guidelines (S&Gs) for new RAC council members, RRT members and new BLM employees. That was the original charge given to this RAC. There have been perceived problems with the S&Gs, maybe from more of a lack of depth of understanding on the part of BLM people, and there will always be a lack of depth of understanding with the public. Because we have a turnover in our membership, we now have a lot of different people since the technical issues were first hammered out years back. Training is needed to resolve the misunderstandings as much as possible.

Bill Coulloudon provided a progress update for Rangeland Health Evaluations and Permit Renewals.

- 46 allotment evaluations were completed in FY 2001. BLM-AZ has completed a total of 261 evaluations.
- 72 permit renewals were completed in FY 2001. Some were re-authorized under the 2001 Grazing rider.
- 10 permit renewal decisions were protested by the Center for Biological Diversity. The final decisions are scheduled to be issued this FY 2002.

FY2002 Schedule for Rangeland Health Evaluations and Permit Renewals:

- BLM-AZ is scheduled to complete 81 permit renewals and 92 allotment evaluations.
- The Washington Office has directed us to develop a 10-year Allotment Evaluation Schedule placing emphasis on Natural Resource Conservation Areas and Monuments over the next two years. In 1997, we projected that we would have all public land allotments in the State evaluated by 2005. This time frame for completing evaluations has been extended to 2008. Staff shortages, changes in policy and litigation have slowed down the evaluation process.
- Priorities for rangeland health evaluations continue to be targeted for allotments that contain high resource values as riparian areas and T&E habitat. Allotments with expiring permits are also considered high priority allotments for evaluations and NEPA analysis.

Bill Coulloudon suggested having the training in Phoenix; a couple hours of in-house training and then go out to the field in the Phoenix area. Mike Taylor offered to have the Phoenix Field Office put together the training and possibly go out to the Agua Fria National Monument.

ACTION: The Chair suggested that the training be included as the first day of the next RAC meet with the business meeting the following day.

AGENDA ITEM: Report from Recreation/Tourism Working Group (Sande McCullen, Chair)

DISCUSSION: Sandy McCullen stated that there are two issues to present to the RAC. The first is the OHV Strategy. Do we want to be continue to be involved in this strategy? And should we expand the OHV strategy to incorporate all recreational strategies?

Steve Saway: If a national strategy is being developed, the RAC can assist if you need us. Don Applegate will bring this offer up to the National meeting coming up in April 2002.

Rick Holloway: Recreation and Tourism is much more than OHV use and we need to look at all areas. We need to establish objectives statewide for all recreation. I want to figure out funding mechanisms to fund these projects. He asked the RAC to help by coming up with suggestions or comments to send to him.

Frances Werner: We would need some time to discuss the RAC's role regarding recreation uses in planning. She suggested finding out what the needs for developing a recreation management plan are in the future including the update of the former recreation document.

The second issue: Just to make you aware that State Parks has hired a publishing firm to do annual off-road vehicle awareness campaigns.

Steve Saway: Suggested Deborah Stevens name be placed on the mailing list to receive information from the State Parks publishing firm.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Wild Horse & Burro Working Group (Frances Werner, Chair)

DISCUSSION: Steve Gobat, Acting Deputy State Director for Resources, gave a summary on the status of the Wild Horse and Burro Program.

- Adoption Program, end-of-year target is 365 animals.
- Total number of animals adopted as of February 20, 2002, is 115 with 4 reassignments. (32% of target).
- Compliance checks in the Phoenix area: 132.
- Animals titled in the Phoenix area: 50.
- Removal Program, end-of-year target is 640.
- Total number of removals (gathers and nuisances): 253 (40% of target).
- Kingman Corrals: 190 animals in the corrals.
- HMAs Censused (Target 5) and Estimated Population: total burro AML 1,137, estimated population 1,713. Total estimated horse population 90.
- Other HMAs and HAS: total burros AML 1850, estimate population 2,628. Total estimated horse population 210.

AZ Program initiatives - Implement AZ Action Plan:

- Establish Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for each Herd Management Area (HMA) by FY 2002.
- Achieve Wild Burro AMLs (estimated at 1,790).
- Develop acceptable and defensible census technique within three years. Employ technique to census each HMA every three years.
- Update/rewrite HMA Plans by 2004.
- Monitor and evaluate each HMA over the next four years.
- Continue compliance on adopted wild horses and burros, issue title after one year.
- Develop the Kingman Corrals into a Regional Facility.

Field Office Updates:

- Lake Havasu - The Three Rivers gathers has been completed.
- Kingman - Big Sandy gather has been completed.
- Phoenix - Apache Junction adoption scheduled for February 22-24: will be held in conjunction with the Lost Dutchman Days.
- Arizona Strip - Completed removal of 14 wild burros to maintain zero population in Tassi Herd Area with an additional 27 removed from Gold Butte (Nevada) Herd Management Area. (They roam between Tassi and Gold Butte).

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Reports from RAC Members

DISCUSSION: None

ACTION: The Chair suggested that during the next meeting, the RAC needs to talk about creating a Land Use Committee (which Lamar Smith brought up at our last meeting).

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Discussion on Future Meetings/Locations

DISCUSSION: Future agenda items:
T Update on 43 CFR 3089 Surface Management Regulations
T Noxious Weed Presentation
T Drought Presentation
T Land Use Committee
T Playback of BLM Director Clark's All Employee Meeting video
T In-Lieu Presentation

ACTION: Next meeting will be in Phoenix, AZ on May 21-22, 2002, location to be announced. (Training will take place on May 21 and business meeting on May 22).

MEETING ADJOURNED